



BANTRAK Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 3
March 2016

The Engineer's Cab: Tim Nixon

As most of you are aware, over the last year or two we've experienced a number of electrical issues tied to poor connections in the few remaining Cinch-Jones connectors' left on the layout. Sometimes it was a voltage drop or dead track around the lift bridge, sometimes it was that various blocks were dead on the DC throttles while working fine on DCC, and sometimes it was just a C-J plug won't stay in the socket. Well, the good news is all those problems should be a thing of the past. A mini-work session took place at Skip Hayes' home in mid-February and a small, dedicated crew replaced most of those plugs with PowerPoles. Skip replaced all the C-J's on the lift bridge, I replaced all the C-J's on the four 3-pack throttles and orange yard throttle, Martin & Bob Mohr disassembled the black "peacemaker" boxes and yard panel to installed PowerPole mounts, and Alan del Gaudio & Lauren re-wired and re-assembled the modified boxes. These changes should eliminate most of these electrical problems. We still need to modify the single throttles, but that is a simple modification that can be done quickly at the next Scale Show. Thanks to Skip, Martin, Bob, Alan, and Lauren for giving up a Saturday to fix club equipment, and special thanks to Skip for providing the work-space.

Speaking of the next Scale Show, Alan del Gaudio has agreed to coordinate, with LeRoy Brandimore and John Hasson as "co-coordinators in training". Look for a call for modules on page 6 of this edition of our newsletter.

At the February meeting we discussed how to handle the BANTRAK charitable contribution for 2016. Traditionally we have given a percentage of our raffle proceeds to a qualified 501c3 charity, and this year will be no different. If you have a local (or national) charity who you think could make good use our contribution this year, please email Alan del Gaudio the name of the charity and some brief information about it, so he can add it to the list of nominations. We will be discussing the issue further at the March meeting and then vote on which of the nominees should receive our donation, so if you have thoughts on the matter and would like your voice heard, make plans to attend the March, meeting. Speaking of the March meeting, it will be on Sunday March 20th at the Jack Walsh's home in Columbia Md. Meeting will start at 2 PM. We've met at Jack's many times, so most of you know the way, but if you need directions, contact either Jack or myself.

Happy Modeling!
Tim Nixon

In the issue...

<i>The Engineer's Cab</i>	1
<i>DC Streetcars</i>	2-3
<i>Visiting Tony Koester</i>	4-5
<i>T-Trak Update</i>	6
<i>N Scale Convention</i>	7
<i>Train Spotting</i>	8
<i>Dues Invoice</i>	9
<i>Calendar</i>	10

Next Meeting...

March 20th



DC Streetcars: Chris Hyland

So early on Saturday, the last weekend in February, a bunch of us T Trakers went to take part in the historical event of streetcars returning to Washington, D.C. Like every historical event, we need to look at the past to see where we are going. Streetcars are much like this.



Washington, D.C. has had a long history with mass transit. The city had started out first with horse cars, then moved to cable cars, and finally to street cars by the First World War. The streetcars ran from overhead wire in the outer neighborhoods to running off of “conduit power”, which was getting electricity from an electric line in the middle of a street via a plough conductor. This was one of the only places in the world that operated in such fashion. But much more than machines, the streetcars united the city in a way that almost nothing else did. The streetcars were what you took not just to go to and from work. They were what you used to go to the movies, the bar, Griffith stadium, home of Washington Senators, shopping at landmark department stores such as the long gone Woodward and Lothrop (Woodies, to natives). If you wanted to escape to the ‘burbs before the 1930’s, it could take you to far away Chevy Chase, Rockville, Hyattsville, Laurel. College Park, Takoma Park, and Kensington in Maryland. It took you on summer days to Glen Echo Park, near the Potomac River, for dances and amusement park rides, even a dip

in the Crystal pool to fend off our notorious hot days. Even moreso, you could cross the bridge at Georgetown (another place reached only by streetcar) to Arlington, Virginia and go to Fairfax, see the waterfalls at Great Falls, visit Colonial Alexandria and go on to Mount Vernon and see where George Washington lived. Eventually, piece-by-piece, it went away until the system was shut down in 1962. And when it was gone, no one realized that it was like cutting a ventricle out of the city. Metro would come later, but it would take several decades to build and it set up. And it was designed not to get people around town, but to get them to and from the suburbs. D.C. decayed and became a shriveled corpse that was filled with drive-by-shootings, drugs, poverty, corruption and urine-soaked streets. We even got the title of Murder Capital of the US. And even better, in this land of Dante, there was no parking either. Something had to give. Change needed to come.

Fast forward to a nice winter day. The sun was shining without a cloud in the pale blue sky. Our party of adventurers consisted of Leon, his wife Francis, Phillip Cabon and his father, Matt G-L and the Hyland Clan. After the first three cars passed us by filled with press and dignitaries, we finally got a shot to ride the car. The streetcar came up to the middle of the bridge from Union Station. It looked sleek and modern. The doors opened and we went on our way.



DC Streetcars: Chris Hyland

The H Street streetcar right now consists of a 2 mile run from Union Station to near the old RFK stadium. The cars are modern and comfortable. Unlike the Baltimore Light Rail, these are true street huggers and speed is not an issue as of yet. With the cars filled to capacity, the trip took us about a half hour each way. This is more like a traditional streetcar. Moves you down the street on comfort, without too much shaking or swaying. It also gives you the feel that you can hop on and off at anytime if you feel like doing so. This part brings in the other factor of the streetcar. It is a force for change. With it, neighborhoods are being re-worked and many of the replacement business are upscale. All in all it is a great ride and for the foreseeable future, it is also free of charge.



So our intrepid party rode to the end of the line, turned around and came back to Union Station. During the whole ride we compared it with Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh and came to a conclusion that this was a beast entirely of its own. Here was the return of a true streetcar. The car dropped us off in back to Union Station where we got lunch and went our separate ways.

There are still several downsides to the streetcar. First thing is obvious. It is only a 2 mile ride that only sort of connects with other forms of public transportation. The system is promised to connect Benning Road with Georgetown, but due to all the years of government graft, poor engineering, and taking forever to construct, who knows where the

future will be. Furthermore, the streetcars force for change is not all positive. Saturday was the equivalent of the Union Pacific Railroad buying Native Americans tickets to ride the train to watch the railroad do a buffalo hunt. As the streetcar goes through neighborhoods on H Street, it is like a battering ram of change. All along the line new places open to cater to hipsters. Upscale clubs will be replacing the local watering holes. Then, coming soon are the cool swanky apartments filled with more hipsters from other places, these will replace the D.C. row houses and will be changing the city. As with all progress there are casualties. And who knows what the cost may be. In order to save a city, have we lost our way? Only time can tell.

My final review of the new Washington street car is this, the ancient prayer of all commuters: God bless and protect all those who serve and ride in her and may they always reach their destinations on time in comfort and in all forms of weather. And I feel the words that Sam Cooke sang: "It's been a long, long time coming, but I know that a change is going to come". Hello again, Washington streetcar, we've missed you, and it was far too long.

So if you find yourself at Union Station waiting for a train and you want a microcosm of our beloved city, sans the monuments, and the tacky tourist crap, ride the H Street streetcar. First it's free, and you get to see the real city, where it's going, and maybe, just maybe catch a glimpse of what it was like to ride a Green and Cream Brill of the old Cap Transit.

The one that soldiered for years as it took the old Washingtonians home, fortified full of Senate beer from a game at Griffith Stadium after a long day of typing out carbons at a nameless "tempo" building or slinging coal at one of the multiple power plants to keep the different branches of government warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

As my friends say at the trolley museum: Ding Ding!!

-Chris

Visiting Tony Koester: David Betz

During the last weekend in January, Eric Payne and I had the opportunity to visit the home layout of Tony Koester. As many of you know Tony has been modeling since before I was born. He is the former editor of *Model Railroad Craftsman* and is currently writing for *Model Railroader*. Additionally, he is the noted author of several books on the subject of model railroading.

Tony very kindly invited us into his home and gave us an in-depth tour of his layout. He explained how the operation of the layout worked and well he shared how he constructed his layout, which happens to depict the Nickel Plate in the 1950s.

During our tour we learned a few new scenery technics and had a deep dive into his choice for DCC systems. For the scenery our two big takeaways were the use of fine black artist sand for the yard ballast, and the use of wire window screening to build landforms.



With the window screening, Tony was able to staple the screen to the side of his roadbed and bench work to generate realistic rolling



Visiting Tony Koester: David Betz



As you may notice in the photos of Tony's yard, he has great black cinder-looking ballast. He used very fine artist sand for this. The sands are available in multiple colors. I think Eric may have tried this idea already, but here is a quick link to the type of sand we are talking about. <http://www.dickblick.com/products/colored-sand/#photos> We appreciated this opportunity to visit Tony's layout and I hope to be invited back again someday soon.

hills and valleys. He then lays dry plaster gauze over the screen and sprays this with water. The water is enough to wet the plaster, which will set and form a hard shell. No gluing dozens of cardboard strips to form a web or dealing with soaked dripping plaster gauze. This seems like a great idea and one I may use in the future.



T-Trak Update: Chris Hyland

So it looks like we are almost out of winters grasp. Though it may have a few surprises for us yet, I think the worst is over. Pretty soon it will be time to run trains. Here at the T Trak command center we have been plugging away making calls and writing emails. If you got bored during the last two months, don't worry; you will get a chance to make up for lost time. By the time this goes to print, we will have been back at Sykesville station. When we get to August, you might as well get ready to live out of your suitcase, fun fun fun! What better way to take care of tax season than by going and hanging out with your mates running all the stuff you accumulated during the last months. Shiny new engines and rolling stock don't make money or enjoyment if they are sitting in the roundhouse or the car barn.

I can hardly wait. It's going to be fun. But it is also known that, like folks said of Peter O'Toole in Lawrence Of Arabia, it is recognized

that I have a funny sense of fun. But isn't that what T Trak is all about? Otherwise we'd be Bend Trackers or worse.

T Trak had a bit of a slow February. We had one show at Sykesville at the start of the month. And we also did a tour of the DC streetcar line. Big thanks to those who came out to see the new magical toy that DC has. Lets hope they don't mess it up too badly. We managed to cram two events into one month. Which when you come to think about it is pretty good considering how bad winters could be. Not bad at all.

So here's to longer, sunnier days. And like crocuses, T Trak is impatient to bloom and get on the road again.

-See you at the shows,

-Chris

Call For Modules: Alan Del Gaudio

The Baltimore Area N-Trak will be participating in the Great Scale Model Train Show starting on Friday, April 22 through Sunday, April 24. Set-up starts at noon on Friday. We are beginning to plan an N-Trak layout. So we'd like to get an idea of who would like to participate with a module [or modules], help setting-up, running trains and needing vendor tables.

Our goal is to have all modules in place by 2 PM. Please let us know of your interest when you can, so we can start with considering layout options. This will be an N-Trak layout.

Our April monthly meeting is Sunday, the 24th at the layout.

Thank you!

Your Coordinators:

Alan Del Gaudio
LeRoy Brandimore
John Hasson

aland2g@comcast.net
lrwb@sprynet.com
johnjhasson@gmail.com



N-Scale Convention:

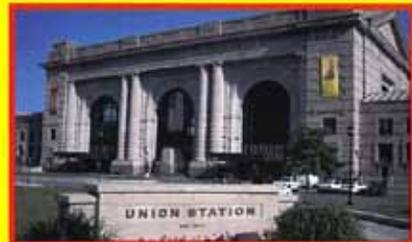


National N Scale Convention

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29 TO
SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2016**

**Sheraton Overland Park 6100 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66211**

913-234-2100



Photos: Jill Morrison and Dick Ollendorf



Other Area Attractions:

- Union Station
- Kansas Speedway
- Ameristar
- Oceans of Fun
- Harry S. Truman Library
- Extreme Grand Prix
- KC Barbecue Tours
- Harley Davidson Factory Tour
- Roasterie Factory Tour
- Gangster Tour
- KC Northern Miniature Railroad
- Belton Grandview & KC Railroad
- Kansas Belle Dinner Train

CHECK OUR WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAIL

National-N-Scale-Convention.com

Contact: Dick Ollendorf, Convention Chairman (610) 923-7535

Dick@NScaleEnthusiast.com

Train Spotting: Jim Altobello

Jim Altobello caught this V R E F-59 engine with Metra(Chicago) car in tow



BANTRAK Membership: Al Palewicz

BANTRAK does a significant amount of charitable activity, although we rarely think of it that way because we get pleasure out of it. When you think about it, that is as it should be with all giving from the heart.

What is our charitable activity? Our major participation is in the B&O Museum's (which is a charitable organization) Annual Festival of Trains. Our display has been a major draw for people to come to the Museum for many years, both recent and in the past. There are plenty more examples, this is just one.

Please contact Treasurer [Alan Del Gaudio](#) for more information regarding your membership status and roster questions or contact [Al Palewicz](#) with general questions.

Member Benefits:

- Sharing of your knowledge (railroading & modeling) with others of similar interests
- Access to railroading and modeling knowledge of other members
- National exposure and recognition of your endeavors in modeling
- Hands on activities: Club modules - track, wiring and scenery. Raffle layout - track and scenery Members' layouts
- Recognition as being part of a Nationally known club.



Baltimore Area Ntrak Club

Dues Invoice

Payable to: Baltimore Area N-Trak

Invoice Date:
12 February 2016
Due Date:
19 April 20, 2016

Remit to:
Mr. Alan Del Gaudio
2905 Montclair Drive
Ellicott City, MD, 21043
Or pay at February or March meetings

Annual Club Dues
(Including National Ntrak Membership)

→ **\$30.00**

Member Name: _____
Please Print
E-mail & Phone: _____

Ntrak Member Number:

Please print a copy of this invoice and submit with payment.

For Treasurer's Use

Date Submitted: _____ Check #: _____

Member's Receipt

Name: _____ Date: _____ Amount: _____

Alan Del Gaudio



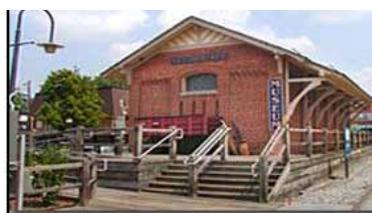
BANTRAK 2016 CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location	Contact	Type
March 6th	Sykesville Tower	Oklahoma Road, Skyesville	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
March 20th	Club Meeting	Jack Walsh's house	Jack Walsh	Meeting
April 2nd	Ranson	Ranson WV	Chris Hyland	T-Trak Show
April 23,24	Great Scale Show	Timonium Fairgrounds	TBD	Show
May 15th	Club Meeting	Arthur Boyd's	Arthur Boyd	Meeting
June 26th	Club Meeting	Sykesville Tower	Ed Hyland	Meeting
July 17	Club Meeting	TBD	TBD	Meeting
August 19-21	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona PA	TBD	Show

BANTRAK CALL BOARD

CLUB WORK SESSION 2016

Contact Tim Nixon, Eric Payne or Paul Diley for work session information.



BANTRAK was founded in 1983 as the Greater Baltimore N-Scale Associates. Begun as a “round robin” group to share skills and experiences, we have expanded our focus to include participation in many diverse activities to promote model railroading in general and N-Scale model railroading in particular. Activities include participation in local, regional and national shows, meets and conventions. BANTRAK membership includes membership in the national NTRAK organization.

The BANTRAK Newsletter is the official publication of Baltimore Area N-TRAK (BANTRAK), Inc. This is your newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to newsletter@bantrak.net
 Editor: David Betz

